

COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE
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JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE COMMISSION ISSUES
PUBLIC ADMONISHMENT OF JUDGE DALE A. REINHOLTSEN

The Commission on Judicial Performance has publicly admonished Judge Dale A. Reinholtsen of the Humboldt County Superior Court. The public admonishment concerns Judge Reinholtsen's failure to act timely on over 20 matters that had been assigned to him, failure to prepare a case progression plan in a case he exempted from meeting certain disposition time goals, submission of false salary affidavits on seven occasions and receipt of his judicial salary in violation of law on 13 occasions. The commission acknowledged that a judge's workload may make prompt decision of all matters submitted to the judge impossible and that the average workload of judges in Humboldt County apparently exceeds the statewide average. The majority of the delays that were grounds for discipline, however, occurred when Judge Reinholtsen was presiding judge and had the duty and the ability to assign and reassign cases and the ability to arrange assistance to ensure that matters were timely decided. The judge's conduct violated canons 3B(1) and 3B(8) of the Code of Judicial Ethics which require judges to dispose of all judicial matters promptly and efficiently and to hear and decide all matters assigned to them, except those in which they are disqualified, and canon 2A which requires judges to respect and comply with the law and to act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity of the judiciary. The commission noted that Judge Reinholtsen had previously been disciplined for conduct that included a nearly one-year delay in processing a complaint about a court commissioner. The commission also took into account the fact that, on many occasions, the judge delayed signing salary affidavits while he had matters under submission for more than 90 days and that the judge appears to have made efforts to avoid similar conduct in the future.

The public admonishment is available on the commission's website at <http://cjp.ca.gov> (under "Pending Cases - Press Releases & Documents" and "Public Discipline & Decisions") and at the commission's office. Judge Reinholtsen is represented by attorney W. Timothy Needham of Eureka.

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The commission is composed of three judges, two lawyers and six public members. The chairperson is Honorable Erica R. Yew of the Santa Clara County Superior Court.

For further information about the Commission on Judicial Performance, see the commission's website at <http://cjp.ca.gov>.